



Stress and frustration can happen to many children. Our children can experience everyday stressors such as worrying about schoolwork, juggling responsibilities, having problems with peers, experiencing financial difficulties in the family, or going through adolescence. Military-connected children have exceptional situations that can influence their stress levels. These situations can add more pressure to their daily lives since they have to adjust to the changes they experience with having a parent in the military. These additional stressors include:

- Frequent moves and adapting to new schools and communities
- Being the new kid again
- Differing academic standards and losing educational opportunities
- Deployments, separations, and reintegration
- Trauma occurs when a parent is wounded, ill, or injured
- Loss of a parent

The National Military Family Association has partnered with Bloom: Empowering the Military Teen (Bloom) to get a snapshot of the experiences of America's military teens. Check out the findings:

<https://www.militaryfamily.org/wp-content/uploads/WEB-MTES-2024.pdf>

Not all stress is negative. Positive stress or eustress helps children grow towards a more mature form of behavior. For example, learning to ride a bike or making a new friend after a move are stressors that help children develop and mark the passage of a developmental milestone. Supporting military-children to view changes as a way to experience new opportunities and grow can help them learn to develop positive coping skills and gain the maturity to handle future stressful situations.

Coping with stress is an ability that will help children for the rest of their life. Encourage and support military-connected children in developing positive coping skills to manage their daily stress and frustration. Help children discover and apply coping skills that work well for them. Remember, what might work for one person does not necessarily work for another. Here are some tips:






- Talk to children about stress and how to manage it. For example, let your military-connected child know that feeling stressed about another move is normal and understandable, and learning to cope with it is a process.
- Provide a consistent routine as it allows for predictability and security.
- Ensure that children balance their daily schedule to allow for relaxation and play.
- Use a planner to teach time management.
- Be vigilant of the amount and type of media your family consumes, mainly if a parent is deployed to a conflict zone.
- Remove at least one stressor by changing or canceling the identified stressor (Ex. Decrease contact with another child who causes conflict; limit activities that cause stress.)
- When you know a stressful situation is approaching, talk about how to respond with positive options. Check the Center for Parent and Teen Communication for details on building a personalized stress management plan. Center for Parent and Teen Communication: <https://parentandteen.com/teen-stress-management-plan/>
- Teach children to identify and face stress through mindfulness. Yoga, relaxing exercises, and slow breathing practices can help children deal with stress and frustration.
- Do not hesitate to seek professional help. Contact a [Military and Family Life Counselor \(MFLC\)](#) or Military OneSource.

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- Military OneSource provides phone services 24/7. Tel. 800-342-9647  
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>
- Practice simple stress management techniques with your child. The [5-4-3-2-1 technique](#) is an easy one. To do this technique, you and your child need to stop for a moment and focus only on the following things. This technique helps to relax and be present in the moment.

### Stress Management Technique

5 Things you can see	
4 Things you can touch	
3 Things you can hear	
2 Things you can smell	
1 Thing you can taste	

### VIDEOS

- Floabulary: Mindfulness and Meditation:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lunkdegBfv4>
- Dr. Smita: Five Ways to Help Your Child Cope with Stress:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HE6lObyJA0A&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HE6lObyJA0A&feature=emb_logo)

<b>MCEC Resources</b> 	<b>MCEC Website</b> 	<b>MCEC Military Student Consultant</b> – personalized support for military families 
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References available upon request.

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